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PRIME MINISTER

Power Station Endurance

Peter Walker is coming with Sir Walter Marshall and Sir Kenneth Couzens to discuss ways of increasing power station endurance. (Mr. Gregson will also be attending.) They will have had a meeting at 9.30 in the morning and will be able to report its outcome to you.

When I spoke to Sir Walter Marshall to invite him to the meeting I explained that you would probably want to take the meeting in two parts:

- (i) Extending endurance during the current dispute.
- (ii) Measures in the longer term to make endurance indefinite.

Under (i) I listed a number of proposals which you have raised or which have been put to you and on which you might like comment:

- Accelerated commissioning of nuclear stations.
- Streamlined arrangements for maintenance of oil-fired capacity.
- Use of diesel/flashing oil to eke out coal supplies.
- Acceleration of cross-Channel link.
- Imports of coal direct to coastal power stations.  
(This has been considered by Mr. Gregson's group but is currently being held in abeyance.)

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- Imports of coal to be transported to inland power stations.
- Supply by lorry to Didcot.
- Extended summer time.

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Under (ii) I listed:

- Contribution of nuclear capacity coming on stream over the next few years.
- Dual firing. (Is what costs the money and takes the time the conversion of boilers, the provision of storage capacity or the construction of supply pipelines?).
- An expansion of the cross-Channel link beyond the planned 2000 MW capacity.
- Larger areas at power stations to allow all coal to be stockpiled at power stations rather than at pit heads.

Sir Walter Marshall responded to the invitation with enthusiasm as he believes he has a good story to tell you. He said that rather than answer these individual points, he would prefer to start with a general presentation. I think he will want to emphasise the improvements in generation which he is securing by better "tuning" of oil-fired and nuclear capacity.

You will need to handle the meeting carefully. If Sir Walter's natural enthusiasm is allowed a free run, it

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it may not be possible to cover the whole agenda in a reasonable time. I believe Mr. Walker may have a private dinner engagement.

AT

ANDREW TURNBULL

24 July 1984

Attached are

- (i) Mr Gregson's paper on increasing coal movements (A)
- (ii) Mr Gregson's note on other measures to increase endurance (B)
- (iii) The original MISC 57 report on endurance at power stations (C)

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